

Effect of Yogic Practices on Anxiety and Feeling of Well-Being amongst Parents of Mentally Challenged Adolescents

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Abstract:

The study was designed to examine whether practice of yoga has a positive effect on the anxiety and feeling of well-being amongst parents of mentally challenged adolescents. The sample consisted of 20 parents of mentally challenged students drawn purposively from Chandigarh. A Yoga training programme was designed and the subjects were exposed to it for a period of four weeks. The effects of yoga on anxiety and feeling of well-being were measured by administering A. K. P. Sinha and L. N. K. Sinha's comprehensive anxiety test whereas effects on feeling of well-being were obtained by applying PGI general well-being measure by Verma and Verma. The data was analyzed in terms of mean, S.D and t-test. The results indicate significant decrease in the level of anxiety and positive change in the feeling of well-being after the practice of yoga. Hence, it can be concluded that yoga puts a positive effect on the anxiety and feeling of well-being amongst the parents of mentally challenged adolescents. The study has its implications for parents, community leaders, and rehabilitation workers.

Keywords: *Yoga, Anxiety, Feeling of Well-being and Parents of mentally challenged adolescents.*

The unique and precious gift given by God is parents who have the important task of rearing her children to whom they have transmitted the gift of life. The parent's task of giving love and taking care of their children, especially the mentally challenged, is considered a biological imperative. In the 21st century, with the advent of the latest social developments, mentally challenged children have been given special attention in society. The spread of education has compelled parents of mentally challenged to come out of their shells and accept their responsibilities towards their mentally challenged children.

In modern times, the behavior of parents of mentally challenged children has undergone tremendous change. Instead of feeling helpless and anxious about the future of their children, they now become more

conscious about the harmonious development of their children and try their best to arrange suitable care for their children. The process of bringing up a mentally challenged child is very complicated and hazardous and requires lot of patience, understanding, ingenuity and strength in large measures. The particular handicap of the child, the slowness in his development, the necessity of special arrangements for physical care, training and companionship and the adjustments which must be made in the family's expectations for the future, combine to create pressure on the parents which tends to disrupt the normal family equilibrium. Added to this pressure, may be the tensions created by child's difficulties in interpersonal relationships, his slowness to learn, his immature self-control and handicap of communication. At the same time, the parent-child relationship is intensified by the child's prolonged immaturity and isolation from a peer group. In some instances, the child remains emotionally and economically dependent upon his family throughout his life (Biswas, 1980).

Moreover, these problems tend to multiply due to misconceptions, superstitions and social stigma attached to

mental retardation. Parents deny their child's problems and suffer from immense anxiety resorting to unscientific ways and means of curing and dealing with the child's retardation. Many additional stresses and strains such as imbalances in the family budget, poor relationship between the siblings, non-acceptance by relatives affect the parents-children relationship leading to a feeling of inadequacy, insecurity, frustration, anxiety and alienation etc.

Batra (1997) pointed out that stress is anxiety or distress caused by any tension or pressure. It is an increasing modern symptom associated with social pressures, which impose a variety of duties and obligation on the parents of these children. This indicates that parents free from all kinds of anxiety and stress in a conducive family environment is essential for proper physical and mental growth of mentally challenged children.

Now a day, yoga is considered to be one of the most important, effective and valuable tools available for human beings to overcome various physical and psychological problems. Yoga refers to the system of practices that help to control the mind, body and soul. It aims at an integrated and harmonious development of all the

potentialities of an individual. Through different poses (asanas), breathing technique (pranayama) and meditation (dhyana), yoga makes the practitioner aware of his inner strengths and weaknesses. It includes fostering of positive attitude and reconditioning of neuromuscular systems which enable the individual to withstand greater stress and strain. Setterlind (1983) found that regular practice of meditation brings a positive change in the well-being of the subjects. Malathi et al. (2000) observed a significant improvement in 9 out of the 11 factors of subjective well-being in healthy volunteers at the end of 4 months of yoga practice. Further, Gopukumar and Hussain Ali (2002) reported that 40 days meditation practice brought a significant positive change in the subjective well-being of students. Kamakhy Kumar (2004) noticed remarkable positive change in P. G. yoga student's anxiety and subjective well-being after practice of a Yoga Nidra daily, half an hour for six months. Shivjeet (2005) concluded that yoga helps in maintain a better feeling of well-being and mental alertness in the individuals who practiced it regularly. Vijayarani, *et al*, (2012) also revealed that yogic practices group showed a decreased level of cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, heart rate and increased level of self

confidence than the control group owing to the training effects of yogic practices.

The present investigation is a further attempt to find out whether yoga has any effect on anxiety and feeling of well-being amongst the parents of mentally challenged adolescents.

Objectives:

The study was planned with the following objectives:

1. To assess the effect of yoga on anxiety amongst the parents of mentally challenged adolescents.
2. To assess the effect of yoga on feeling of well-being amongst the parents of mentally challenged adolescents.

Hypotheses:

In order to carry out the investigation, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The yoga will significantly have a positive effect on anxiety amongst the parents of mentally challenged adolescents.
2. The yoga will significantly have a positive effect on feeling of well-being of mentally challenged adolescents.

Sample:

The sample comprised 20 parents of mentally challenged students drawn from Chandigarh. The age group of 20 purposively selected participants was 30 -40 years.

Tools:

Sinha's comprehensive Anxiety test developed by A. K.P. Sinha and L. N. K. Sinha (1995) was used to measure the anxiety level of subjects. The test consists of 90 items pertaining to various symptoms of anxiety. Higher the scores on the test indicate higher anxiety and vice-versa.

PGI General Well-being measure developed by Verma and Verma (1989) was used to measure the feeling of well-being level of subjects. The P.G.I General Well-being Scale appears to be a reliable and valid tool to measure positive mental health of Indian subjects.

Design and Method of the Study:

The study employed one group pre-test and post-test field experimental design. The design involved three operational stages. The first stage involved pre-testing of subjects' about their anxiety and feeling of well-being. The second stage involved

exposure of subjects to yoga training programme. The investigator took the help of specialized yoga instructor for administering the yoga classes for 30 days daily for one hour in the morning at Community Centre, Sector-32, Chandigarh. The participants were exposed to the theoretical as well as practical aspects of yoga. The participants were given theory classes on the importance of yogic exercises, *Ashtanga Yoga*, *Asanas*, *Pranayamas*, natural diet, concentration and meditation followed by practical sessions on *Pranayama* and five *Asanans*. The component of *Pranayama* involved training on *Bhastrika*, *Kapalbhati*, *Anulom-Vilom*, *Brhamari* and *Omkar* recitation whereas only one kind of yogic *asanas* consists *Surya Namaskara*. It was thought that a regular practice of the *Pranayama* and *asanas* would bring total relaxation to the body which is essential for the development of better feeling of well-being and balanced emotional development and reduces the level of anxiety of parents of mentally challenged child. The third stage included post-testing of the same group using the same tool after a gap of fifteen days of yoga training programme.

Findings:

The obtained data was analyzed in terms of mean, SD and 't' and is presented in the tables as follows:

Table-1: Mean, SD and 'T' value of Anxiety variable for Parents of Mentally Challenged students (N=20)

Sr. No.	Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test		't' – value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Anxiety	8.0	1.97	4.65	1.49	6.06*

*p<.01

Table-1 reveals that there was significant difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores of anxiety variable of parents of mentally challenged students as the calculated value of "t" value i.e. 6.06 is higher than its tabulated value at 0.01 level. This clearly shows that yoga practice leads

to significant improvement in the anxiety variable of parents of mentally challenged students. Hence, on the basis of the results, the hypothesis 1 of the study i.e. "The yoga will significantly have a positive effect on anxiety amongst the parents of mentally challenged adolescents" was accepted.

Table-2: Mean, SD and 'T' value of Feeling of Well-Being variable for Parents of Mentally Challenged students (N=50)

Sr. No.	Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test		't' – value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Feeling of Well-Being	10.1	1.51	12.6	3.03	3.30*

*p<.01,

The perusal of Table-2 reveals that there was significant difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores of feeling of well-being variable of parents of mentally challenged students as the calculated value of "t" value i.e. 3.30 is higher than its tabulated value 0.01 level. This clearly

shows that yoga practice leads to significant improvement in the feeling of well-being of parents of mentally challenged students. Hence, on the basis of the results, the hypothesis 2 of the study i.e. "The yoga will significantly have a positive effect on

feeling of well-being of mentally challenged adolescents” was accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Results reveals that there was significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of anxiety variable of parents of mentally challenged students as the calculated value of “t” (6.06) is higher than its tabulated value at 0.01 level. Results on feeling of well-being have the same explanation as it too found increased due to yoga training. Therefore, practice of yoga by the parents of mentally challenged children may help them from coming out of being restless, hostile and aggressive. Yoga may also instill in them ability to live independent life and being active in arranging household and social activities for their children. The results are in agreement with Seaward (1999) who reported that habitual yogic meditation increases mental homeostasis characterized by increased concentration and awareness which helps in achieving a greater sense of well-being. Mahendran (2001) found that yogic relaxation is effective in controlling anxiety and increases the subjective well-being. Gupta & Gupta (2006), Gupta, Khera, Vempati, Sharma and Bijalani (2006) and Jadhav and Havalappanavar (2007) also reported

decrease in state anxiety level of the practitioners as a result of yogic practices. Thus, it may be inferred that the practice of yoga for one month may help the parents of mentally challenged students to develop better feeling of well-being, emotional stability and mental health to take proper care of their Children. Yoga helps in improving irritability, stubbornness, feeling of inferiority, restlessness, and immorality among the group.

Hence, yoga proves to be a motivational tool in reducing anxiety level and increasing feeling of well-being of parents of mentally challenged adolescents who were suffering from the problem of inferiority complexes, anxiety, depression and maladjustment in their life. The present study has certain limitations. Firstly, the limited size of the sample precludes the generalization of the findings of the study. If the researchers want to replicate the study they may select a large sample. Secondly, the present study undertook a pre-experimental design which is not holding a high degree of acceptance among the researcher as it fails to provide the equivalence to the group and random selection of the sample, therefore, a true experimental design be implemented to address this issue.

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